

CLERK'S OFFICE U.S. DIST. COURT  
AT ROANOKE, VA  
FILED

January 13, 2025

LAURA A. AUSTIN, CLERK

BY:

s/A. Beeson  
DEPUTY CLERK

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA  
ROANOKE DIVISION

JOSEPH S. SMITH,  
Petitioner,

v.

CHADWICK S. DOTSON,  
Respondent.

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Case No. 7:24-cv-00915

By: Michael F. Urbanski

Senior United States District Judge

**MEMORANDUM OPINION**

Joseph S. Smith, a Virginia inmate proceeding pro se, commenced this action by filing a petition for writ of mandamus against Chadwick S. Dotson, the Director of the Virginia Department of Corrections (VDOC). Smith seeks to compel the VDOC to dismiss disciplinary actions taken against him at Lawrenceville Correctional Center and Wallens Ridge State Prison. For the following reasons, the petition is **DENIED**.

Federal district courts have jurisdiction in “any action in the nature of mandamus to compel an officer or employee of the United States or any agency thereof to perform a duty owed to the plaintiff.” 28 U.S.C. § 1361. “Mandamus relief is a drastic remedy and should be used only in extraordinary circumstances.” In re Matousek, 857 F. App’x 146, 146 (4th Cir. 2021) (citing Cheney v. United States Dist. Court, 542 U.S. 367, 380 (2004)). A party seeking a writ of mandamus must show that “his right to the issuance of the writ is clear and indisputable” and that he “has no other adequate means to attain the relief he desires.” Media Gen. Operations, Inc. v. Buchanan, 417 F.3d 424, 433 (4th Cir. 2005).

Smith is unable to show that he has a clear and indisputable right to the requested mandamus relief. It is well settled that federal courts do not have jurisdiction to grant

mandamus relief against state officials. Gurley v. Superior Ct. of Mecklenburg Cnty., 411 F.2d 586, 587 (4th Cir. 1969). Consequently, the relief sought by Smith is not available by way of a mandamus action in federal court. In re Matousek, 857 F. App'x at 146.

For these reasons, Smith's petition for writ of mandamus is **DENIED**. An appropriate order will be entered.

Entered: January 13, 2025

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mike Urbanski', is positioned to the left of the typed name and title.

Mike Urbanski  
Senior U.S.District  
Judge  
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Michael F. Urbanski  
Senior United States District Judge